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House of Representatives

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1997

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 455 and rule XXIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 3662.

□ 1209

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 3662) making appropriations for the Department of the Interior and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1997, and for other purposes, with Mr. BURTON of Indiana in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered as having been read the first time.

Under the rule, the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. REGULA] and the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. YATES] will each control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. REGULA].

Mr. REGULA. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Let me say at the outset, Mr. Chairman, that the gentleman from Illinois and myself have worked closely on this bill along with the other members of our subcommittee. I think we bring to the Members today a very responsible bill given the fiscal constraints.

I would point out the chart that is in the well demonstrates that we appropriate a total of about \$12 billion and save the taxpayers, save future generations \$500 million plus the interest that they would have to pay on that money. But at the same time we take care of the things that are vitally important and that people care about in this country, our public lands, in many in-

stances, the parks, the forests, the fish and wildlife facilities, the grazing lands managed by the BLM. They are the jewels of this Nation and I think we have a great responsibility to manage these facilities and this resource well so that we can leave it as a legacy to future generations.

I would like to start by giving some little known facts about this bill. Let me start with the Forest Service. The National Forest System covers 8 percent of all the land in America. Of all the land, 8 percent is in national forests. The national forests produce 55 percent of the water for 16 western States. I think that is a significant fact. Fifty-five percent of the water that they use for irrigation, for municipal water supplies, for the many, many purposes, for industrial uses, 55 percent of that in the 16 western States comes from our public lands. Three hundred million recreational visitors to the Forest Service lands every year, 300 million Americans enjoyed these lands. Half of the Nation's ski lift capacity is on forest land. For those that like to ski undoubtedly if you have gone out in the western States, you have been on public lands. Half of the Nation's big game and cold water fish habitat is on the national forest lands.

With respect to timber harvest, I might say there has been a lot of concern about the fact that we have been excessively harvesting timber, recognizing the importance of it for multiple use, recognizing the importance of timber lands in providing water supply, that we might be doing too much. But let me point out that we are on a downward glide path. We harvested 11 billion board feet, in 1990. It this bill today it provides for 4.3 billion board feet, almost one-third of what we were allowing in 1990. I think it is a recognition that the national forests have far greater value in terms of multiple use and in terms of our watershed than perhaps just for timber harvest.

Little known facts is the Department of Energy. Fossil energy research focuses on cleaning up the environment and reducing energy consumption. We hear a lot about clean air and clean water and how important these are to our Nation and to the people in our society. Well, the fossil energy program is directed right at that need and the importance of cleaning up the environment. Low emission boilers will reduce sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide emissions by 80 percent once we develop the technology. I mention these things because during the course of handling this bill, there will be an amendment to reduce—maybe several—to reduce our fossil energy commitment in terms of research, but keep in mind, any vote to cut fossil research, and we have already reduced it considerably, a vote to do that is a vote against the environment, it is a vote against reducing energy consumption.

Advanced turbine systems will dramatically reduce emissions and reduce energy consumption while supporting 100,000 high-paying U.S. jobs and the export of 3 billion dollars' worth of technology. We hear a lot about the balance of payments. Again, a vote to reduce the fossil budget and I think the gentleman from California [Mr. BROWN] addressed it well during the rule debate, is a vote against increasing exports, it is a vote against U.S. jobs, against cleaning up our environment.

I would point out also in the Office of Surface Mining in the bill, we fund \$4 million for a new Appalachian clean streams. Again, an effort to clean up the water to preserve this resource for the future.

Public lands, Interior and the Forest Service, are about one-third of the Nation's land mass. We manage it for clean waters and for open space and we try to preserve as much as possible the pristine values of our wilderness lands,

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

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